

For Immediate Release
September 30, 2011

Contact: Joy Forehand
505.841.8450

NMDWS Launches Work Search Verification Pilot Project
Increased efforts to verify UI required work search documentation

(Albuquerque, NM) – The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) has launched the Work Search Verification Pilot Project to address unemployment insurance (UI) program integrity and adherence to UI benefit requirements. All UI claimants are required to conduct a minimum of two work search contacts for each week that benefits are claimed, keep a record of those work search contacts, and provide the record to NMDWS upon request. NMDWS performs a random audit based on federal requirements; the Work Search Verification Pilot Project will increase the number and frequency of work search cases to be reviewed.

For the Work Search Verification Pilot Project, 50 UI claimants per week will be identified in the UI claims and benefit system. The pilot project will randomly select claimants to report their work search documentation during a predetermined week on their claim. Once the documentation has been submitted to NMDWS, their work search efforts will be audited by department staff.

“It is the responsibility of all eligible unemployment insurance claimants to meet the requirements for benefits, including that they be actively seeking work and conducting weekly work searches,” said Cabinet Secretary Celina Bussey. “This pilot project is one of many ways the department is working to prevent and detect improper unemployment insurance payments.”

Claimants are mailed a letter requesting their work search documentation for the named week. The claimant work search documentation is distributed to trained UI personnel who conduct a work search audit to one named employer. Should a claimant not provide the appropriate documentation within 10 days, their benefits are suspended until they comply, and if a claimant has an unacceptable or false work search, they are subject to a warning. If they are found again to have falsified a work search on subsequent weeks, they will be subject to a suspension of benefits. Once the pilot project timeframe is completed (10 weeks), the department will evaluate the pilot program and launch the work search verification program.

###